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Kobdo to Kalgan, and thence to Ulassoutai via Urga, in Mongolia. From Ulassoutai he turned west to the Chuya river, which was reached at Kosh-agach. Nearly the whole of this journey was through unexplored territory. No less than 2700 miles were surveyed and twenty-six points determined astronomically as well by chronometer as by occultations. Barometrical measurements were made during the whole journey, and very rich zoological, botanical and mineralogical collections were obtained.

Bangkok, the capital of Siam, is to be united to the telegraphic system of the world by a partly overland and partly submarine line connecting with the one now running to Moulmein.

M. W. Shapira sends to the *Athenæum* (March 13, 1880) an interesting account of a journey of four months during the summer of 1879 in the interior of Yemen, the Arabia Felix of the Romans. He describes it as the most fertile and temperate country on this side of Asia, owing its happiness chiefly to the absence of the Shumum winds—the great curse of Syria and Northern Africa—and its prosperity to its having two rainy seasons of four months each, and consequently two harvests in the year. The mountains make the climate temperate and healthy. Yemen has an area of about 50,000 miles, more than half of which belongs to a series of plateaux from 4000 to 8500 feet above the level of the sea. The boundary line of Yemen is as follows: western side, along the eastern side of the Red sea, from Bab-el-Mandab south to Lohaya north; then north side, from Lohaya north-west to Saada north-east; then from Saada north-east to Aden south-east; then from Aden south-east to Bab-el-Mandab south-west, so that it forms an oblong square of about 110 to 150 miles wide and 450 long. The chief towns of Yemen are situated on the second plateau, from 6000 to 7000 feet above the sea. This plateau is fertile and well watered.

MICROSCOPY.¹

ORGANISMS IN ICE FROM STAGNANT WATER.—During the past season on account of the unusually mild weather, ice has been gathered quite extensively from stagnant water in canals and ponds. Since the middle of February I have been making microscopical investigations with regard to the purity of such ice. The plan adopted has been to select only those fragments taken from the interior of blocks which appear clean and transparent to the unassisted eye. On melting those fragments and examining the water thus obtained with various magnifying powers up to 900 diameters, bits of vegetable tissues and conervoid growths are usually recognizable at once. I have not noticed animalculæ in an active state in water from ice that has just been melted, but upon allowing such water to settle and become warm at the or-

¹ This department is edited by Dr. R. H. WARD, Troy, N. Y.

dinary temperature of a room occupied for living purposes, the sediment deposited may be found to contain, after some hours, monads whose movements are easily discernible with a magnifying powers of from 200 to 400 diameters. Upon allowing the water to stand still longer I have found the conservæ growing thrifitly, and in some instances forming clusters or bundles frequented by minute animalculæ, the entire appearance in this case being very similar to that presented by the nests occupied by the young of the common *Paramecium* which I have seen in stagnant water. As the result of these investigations I am fully convinced that freezing does not free water from filth due to the presence of sewage or decaying vegetable matter, and further, that it is altogether probable that the germs from which animalculæ are developed, if not the animalculæ themselves in a quiescent state, are present in very much of the ice taken from stagnant water. This being the case, it would seem that the use of such ice in drinking water is hazardous, to say the least.—*M. A. Veeder, Lyons, N. Y.*

AMERICAN SOCIETY OF MICROSCOPISTS.—The Executive Committee of this Society has decided upon Tuesday, August 17th, as the date of the coming meeting at Detroit, which is expected to continue four days. Ample arrangements are already being made for the entertainment of the Society by the local Microscopical Club.

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SCIENTIFIC NEWS.

— EDITORS NATURALIST.—The severe criticism upon a short paper on the Entomostraca, which I published in the Report of the Minnesota Geological Survey, seems to admit of a reply.

The writer is not uncognizant of numerous faults in the paper, but is not willing to renounce the hope, expressed in the preface, that it will be of some slight service to those for whom it was designed.

The reviewer seems to ignore the design of the paper and the avowal of the author, which cover most of the points criticised.

It was intended as an aid to those who are interested in such humble forms, but are unable to secure the numerous foreign works necessary to obtain a complete view of the group.

The definition of the new species was but an incidental feature.

The names of the sources of information used are, for the most part, mentioned in the preface, so it is obvious the harsh criticism on this point is uncalled for.

The statement that no credit is given for facts and bibliographical lists is covered by that fact, and the instance cited (*Daphnia pulex*) does contain references to Baird's work.

The animus of the criticism is visible in the fact that the reviewer deplores the absence of reference, in one case at least, to